

Proposal Refused by new House Majority

WASHINGTON—Today, U.S. Representative Mike Quigley's (IL-05) proposal to make all earmark requests in the 112th Congress public was rebuffed by the new House leadership. Quigley's submission for the House Rules Package for the 112th Congress would have required all members of Congress to disclose all requests for funding in their Congressional district to be posted on their official website, which would include official earmark requests as well as soft earmark requests like letters, phone calls, or directly soliciting a federal agency.

"After months of tough talk about transparency, the new House majority simply ignored a voice calling for more openness and accountability," said Quigley. "Refusing amendments on the first bill of the new Congress is bad process, and disregarding transparency in spending requests is bad policy."

The House Rules Package was brought to the floor without the chance to offer amendments. While the House will not accept earmarks in the 112th Congress, there are no measures in place to disclose alternative efforts to direct federal dollars.

In his first term in Congress, one of Quigley's first legislative actions was to [introduce a bill](#)

[banning corporate earmarks](#)

. The measure was

[adopted by the House in 2011](#)

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A copy of the full letter is below:

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling

Chairman

The House Republican Conference

1420 Longworth HOB

Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Dreier

Chairman

House Committee on Rules

H-312 The Capitol

Washington, DC 20515

January 3, 2011

Dear Chairman Hensarling and Chairman Dreier:

This Wednesday marks a very important day for the 112th Congress. We will be sworn in as new members of a body with very big decisions to make regarding how we will proceed as a Congress, and what Rules will govern what we do on the House floor. I hope that you join me in my quest for a government that is open and honest, and accountable to its people. Transparency must be first and foremost in everything we do in the next two years and beyond.

One of my very first actions in Congress was to propose legislation to ban earmarks for private entities, an initiative that was adopted by the House Committee on Appropriations in the 111th Congress. I fully support the decision to make for-profit earmarks a policy of the past, because the most precious commodity we have in the House of Representatives—and all of Washington—is the people's trust. The best way to make sure we don't lose it is to curb pay-to-play politics and crack down on wasted and misused federal funds.

Not only do taxpayers deserve to know how their dollars are being spent, but they also deserve to have them spent judiciously, transparently, and without political influence. It is with this in mind that I bring to your attention today an initiative I respectfully request you include in the House Rules Package for the 112th Congress – a measure that will require Members to disclose any requests they have made for funding, be that an official earmark request, a letter, or a call to an agency. Any move to direct funds to a Congressional District must be accounted for and made available on that Members' official website.

These unofficial initiatives to congressionally direct spending accounted for billions of dollars in spending in 2006, according the Congressional Research Service. The American people deserve to know where their tax dollars are being sent, and by whom. This proposal will shed light on an important part of the spending process.

Thank you for considering this request for inclusion of a “soft earmark” disclosure. This initiative is but one small step towards a more accountable government. I look forward to working with you on similar endeavors in the 112th Congress.

Sincerely,

Mike Quigley (IL-05)

Member of Congress